

JOHN FRANCILLON, F.L.S.,
A FEW FACTS

By Lieut. Col. C. F. COWAN*

John Francillon is a split personality. It is high time to heal that split. Ornithologists and transatlantic entomologists say he was a London jeweller who collected and traded in natural history objects. Hagen, in his usually accurate entomological bibliography of 1862, since copied throughout the Old World and, by Musgrave and others, in the Antipodes, simply called him a London doctor. For once Hagen was wrong. He was the first to call him a doctor, which no one in his lifetime did. Within the last ten years an entomologist collaborating with a Francillon relative published a "pedigree" and said; "We know that he lived in London and practised as a physician", calling him also a doctor and, on a later page, a surgeon. Enquiry of that writer brought eventual admission that the relative (since deceased) had known nothing of John Francillon's activities; to him he was "just a name on a chart", and so the writer had simply "followed Hagen". Even that pedigree is suspect, with mud-dles over his wives and date of death.

My mild interest in the man was aroused when, in about 1967, I was studying Boisduval's publications, and those of John Abbot. In various accounts of the latter's life the name of Francillon often briefly recurred. One day, in a library, I overheard another visitor say, and noted on a card; "John Francillon, buried 28 June 1816, St. Clement Danes, age 72". That burial date has proved correct; if his stated age was also correct he would have been born between July 1743 and June 1744. Most writers opt for ?1744 at present.

My interest was further stirred in 1974 when a lepidopterist asked if I knew where Francillon had collected in Norfolk Island. I could only reply that he was a London jeweller, ?1744-1816, that his foreign material had been "collected" by trading in England, and that his only connection with Norfolk was his London address, 24 Norfolk Street in the Strand. About two years later came the unfortunate errors mentioned above which, failing correction by their author, resolved me to put matters right. However, constant delays supervened and, now housebound and unable to follow the trails on foot, I must rely on correspondence.

So far nothing is known of the first half of Francillon's life. The few facts which have surfaced are tabulated as "events" below.'

1. 1780, 18 Oct. "Francillon, John, jeweller, 43 Friday Street, enlisted H.A.C. Resigned 1780." (Goold-Walker, 1933-37: 306).

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Notes: That address was also, from 1760-81, that of John Cripps, jeweller (Heal, 1935: 134). Friday Street then ran south from Cheapside exactly opposite Wood Street and Love Lane, the home until 1770 of Dru Drury the famous goldsmith and celebrated collector (*ibid.*: 144).

2. 1780-82. About this time John Francillon married Sarah Susannah Kilburn, of Pages Walk, Bermondsey.
3. 1784. "Cripps & Francillon, jewellers, 43 Friday St." Trade Card listed (Heal, *l.c.*: 134)
4. 1785, 14 Sep. His first recorded child baptised; Sarah Ann. Two further daughters are recorded; Elizabeth, bap. 21 Apr. 1790 and Mary, bap. 20 Sep. 1792.
5. 1786, Apr. 24 – May 13. Sale of Duchess of Portland's collections. Francillon a buyer. His active field collecting was probably now over.
6. 1790-96. "Cripps & Francillon, jewellers. 24 Norfolk St., Strand." Trade Card listed (Heal, *l.c.*: 134).
7. 1793-96. The eminent J. C. Fabricius repeatedly cited the collection of "Dom. Francillon" in his *Entomologia Systematica*, and named as a new species the small moth *Pyralis francillana*, adding; "Francillon Anglus Insectorum strenuus collector." N.B. that Fabricius certainly knew that Francillon was not a doctor, always calling him Dom.[inus], or Mr., as for Dom. Banks, Dom. Drury, &c., not as for Dr. Hunter, Dr. Fothergill, *et. al.*
8. 1795. Publication of Francillon's *Description of a rare Scarabaeus from Potosi, in South America; with [2] engraved Representations of the same, coloured from Nature*, in 4^o (203 x 273 mm), [8] pp., Pl. (2 figs). The figures show the unpinned, unset beetle, named *Scarabaeus macropus*, or "Kangaroo Beetle" (the kangaroo proper then being highly topical).
9. 1802. Correspondence with Baron C. A. Walckenaer, Paris, on Georgian insects. The Baron reopened the correspondence in 1821 with John Abbot.
10. 1805, May 23-25. Auction of Dru Drury's collection. Francillon (age 61) a buyer. William Swainson (age 16) attended. Contact doubtful.
11. 1807. Mr. John Francillon, 24 Norfolk St., elected Fellow of the Linnean Society of London.
12. 1807, Nov. 11. John Francillon, jeweller, of Norfolk St., signed his will. Executor and executrix William Kilburn of Carshalton, Surrey, and his sister Sarah Susannah, wife of John.
13. 1816, June 23. Death of John Francillon. Funeral Jun. 28, at St. Clement Danes. Aug. 14, will proved "by oath of Sarah Susannah Francillon, widow and relict, and William Kilburn."

14. 1817, May 27, 28. First auction of collections at 24 Norfolk St. Library, fossils, shells, birds, eggs.
15. 1817, Jul. 25, 26. Second auction; British insects.
16. 1818, Jun. 11-20. Final auction; foreign insects, spiders. The 1328 lots realised £725. 11s. 6d. Alexander Mcleay bought "not far short of half".

Francillon's associates are of interest. His perceptive choice of printer, young Charles Whittingham (1767 - 1840), son of a Warwickshire farmer, had moved to London in 1789 and set up as a printer, aiming for quality. Francillon's publication was one of his early products and soon, as his presses became more numerous, he moved out to Chiswick where (1810) he founded the well-known Chiswick Press (D.N.B.).

The fine plate in Francillon's work carries, in my copy, no legend, thus appearing illegal. Comparison with the British Library copy reveals that the modern binders of mine have trimmed a few mm off the extreme bottom margin, complete with the small engraved subscription "Publish'd as the Act directs by, John Francillon, No. 24, Norfolk Street in the Strand. S. Edwards del. & Sculpt."

Sydenham Teak Edwards (? 1758-1819) had recently started working for William Curtis, engraving the majority of plates for his well-known *Botanical Magazine* in the period 1788-1815 (D. N. B.; others spell his second name "Teast").

His predecessor under Curtis, for the *Flora Londinensis* (1777-87) had been William Kilburn (1745-1818), recently moved with mother and sister from Dublin to Bermondsey, "near the nursery garden of Curtis, who saw his drawings and persuaded him to assist" (Blunt, 1967: 189). Kilburn became Francillon's brother-in-law, and soon afterwards moved to Carshalton, Surrey, where he resumed his true trade by taking over a calico-printing works, and prospered (D.N.B.).

Francillon's reason for producing his little publication may have been that he contemplated emulating Dru Drury's *Illustrations of Natural History* (1770-1782), for which he was now collecting ample material. If a success, and if he enjoyed it, the lack of page numbering would have enabled further instalments to be added. Fortunately he did not add to it, thus avoiding the risk of following Drury into bankruptcy. Perhaps also the appearance of Smith & Abbot's *Lepidopterous Insects of Georgia* (1797), with Sir James Smith's elegant text, deterred him; as surely it disheartened Thomas Martyn who, in that same year, abandoned in chaos his projected and partly completed *Psyche*. Martyn, then of King Street, Covent Garden, moved to 10, Great Marlborough Street and apparently disposed of his insects to one Green of Westminster. This may have been Rupert Green (?1769 - 16 Nov. 1804), son of the print-

publisher Valentine Green, because Martyn's insects were auctioned for a Green of Westminster posthumously on 16 Jul. 1805 (D.N.B. and Chalmers-Hunt, 1976: 69, 69n).

So much for facts, so far. It is hoped eventually to discover something about the first half of John Francillon's life. Why did John Abbot call him his "great friend" when writing to Swainson shortly before 1838? Did the two Johns meet at Drury's home in Love Lane before 1770, and then collect together? Perhaps sisters Elizabeth and Charlotte Abbot collected with them. Whom did Francillon marry before 1780 - - - ?

The first event known so far of Francillon is his enlistment, age 36, in Honourable Artillery Company. His reason for doing so is a puzzle. Perhaps he had just suffered the loss of a wife and had no offspring. Perhaps he had had bad news, or none at all, from his friend John Abbot in Georgia, now beset by the War of Independence, and thought he might help. Or perhaps he had just had a minor catastrophe with his collection. Whatever it was, it resulted in a gain for us, giving an opening for research into his private life, as although no such records were kept in those days, the present H. A. C. Archivist, Mrs. Jean Tsushima, adopted him as "one of her boys", and has helped enormously with this aspect. Events 2, 4, 12 and 13 are entirely due to her enthusiastic co-operation.

One further event must be recorded. The original specimen (the holotype) of *Scarabaeus macropus* Francillon, 1795 was sold at the 1818 auction under the auctioneer's name "*Melolontha Kangaroo*" (Sale Catalogue p.6, lot 118), since when it has been lost. Enquiries to locate it in the B.M.(N.H.) and the Hope Department, Oxford, were unavailing. Enquiry of the Macleay Museum, University of Sydney produced the request for a modern specimen for comparison. The next best thing, colour enlargements from Sydenham Edward's figures, were sent, resulting in its rapid discovery. One antenna, a mid-leg, and all tarsi, are missing, but otherwise it is in its original posture, now with a pin through the metathorax laterally. No original labels survive; only a mid-19th. century one misidentifying it as "*Macropnus (sic) crassipes* Horn". It is hoped that Dr. D. S. Horning jr., Curator of Invertebrates, the Macleay Museum, Sydney, will report his find in due course.

Acknowledgements

Numerous brief enquiries to, and NIL but helpful replies from, among others, the Royal Colleges of Physicians and of Surgeons (either of whom would have known had Francillon "practised in London") were made and gratefully received, but are too numerous to detail. The breakthrough came with the 1780 H.A.C. reference

given me by the Research Assistant, Mrs. C. Hickey, of the Society of Huguenots of London.

Thereafter, the tireless and often frustrating searches of Mrs. Tsushima already mentioned, including the finding of Francillon's will, were invaluable. The diligent help of Miss Julie Harvie, of the Entomological Library, B.M.(N.H.) in finding the legalising legend to Francillon's plate, was a great relief. Finally, the able and ready co-operation of Dr. D. S. (Woody) Horning Jr. of Sydney, is gratefully acknowledged.

References

The D.N.B. and well known botanical and entomological works are excluded.

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COSMOPTERIX ORICHALCEA STAINTON (LEP.: MOMPHIDAE)
IN THE ISLE OF RHUM — In a box of unidentified microlepidoptera in the Royal Museum of Scotland (formerly the Royal Scottish Museum) I recently detected a specimen of *Cosmopterix orichalcea* Stainton which had been collected by Mr. Peter Wormell, at that time Chief Warden, in the Isle of Rhum National Nature Reserve (V.C. 104) on 26th June 1967. The specimen was taken in the Harris tree plot which was planted between 1960 and 1965. The trees used for this planting were all raised on Rhum except for *Pinus contorta* obtained from Aberdeen. No trees were imported from England (P. Wormell, *in lit.*). *C. orichalcea*, which feeds as a larva on various marshland grasses, could have been breeding in that tree plot, but some less exposed area on the other side of the island around Kinloch would seem more suitable ground for it.

This is the first record of this species from Scotland: Dr. M. R. Shaw of the Royal Museum of Scotland kindly confirmed this from the Scottish Insect Record Index. It is also very far from its recorded range in southern England. E. C. PELHAM-CLINTON, Furzeleigh House, Lyme Road, Axminster, Devon, EX13 5SW.